

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A one-phase microemulsion composition comprising;
(A) a hydrophilic nonionic surfactant,
(B) a lipophilic nonionic surfactant,
(C) an oil component,
(D) a dimethyl ether compound of a polypropylene glycol/polyethylene glycol copolymer ~~compound or its dimethyl ether compound~~ that does not interdissolve with the oil component, and the critical micelle concentration (CMC) of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in the compound is higher than that of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in water, and
(E) water.
2. (Previously Presented) The one-phase microemulsion composition according to claim 1, wherein the HLB of (A) the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant is not less than 13, and the HLB of (B) the lipophilic nonionic surfactant is not more than 6.
3. (Previously Presented) The one-phase microemulsion composition according to claim 1, wherein the blending amount of (C) the oil component is 10–40 % by mass.
4. (Previously Presented) The one-phase microemulsion composition according to claim 1, wherein (C) the oil component is silicone oil.

5. (Previously Presented) The one-phase microemulsion composition according to claim 4, wherein (C) the oil component is one or more selected from the group consisting of decamethylcyclopentasiloxane, dimethylpolysiloxane, and methylphenylpolysiloxane.
6. (Currently Amended) The one-phase microemulsion composition according to claim 1, wherein the blending amount of (D) the dimethyl ether compound ~~water-miscible solvent~~ is not less than 5 % by mass.
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)
9. (Currently Amended) A production method of a one-phase microemulsion composition, comprising;
a W/O emulsion preparation step in which a W/O (water-miscible solvent-in-oil type) emulsion is prepared by mixing and stirring (A) a hydrophilic nonionic surfactant, (B) a lipophilic nonionic surfactant, (C) an oil component, and (D) a dimethyl ether compound ~~of a polypropylene glycol/polyethylene glycol copolymer compound or its dimethyl ether compound~~ that does not interdissolve with the oil component, and the critical micelle concentration (CMC) of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in the dimethyl ether compound is higher than that of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in water; and
a phase inversion step to an O/W one-phase microemulsion by adding (E) water to the W/O emulsion.
10. (Currently Amended) An O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation comprising;
(A) a hydrophilic nonionic surfactant,
(B) a lipophilic nonionic surfactant,
(C) an oil component,

(D) a dimethyl ether compound of a polypropylene glycol/polyethylene glycol copolymer compound or its dimethyl ether compound that does not interdissolve with the oil component, and the critical micelle concentration (CMC) of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in the dimethyl ether compound is higher than that of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in water, and

(E) water;

and in the O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation, the particle size of the emulsified particles is 10–500 nm.

11. (Currently Amended) A production method of an O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation comprising;

a W/O emulsion preparation step in which a W/O (water-miscible solvent-in-oil type) emulsion is prepared by mixing and stirring (A) a hydrophilic nonionic surfactant, (B) a lipophilic nonionic surfactant, (C) an oil component, and (D) a dimethyl ether compound of a polypropylene glycol/polyethylene glycol copolymer compound or its dimethyl ether compound that does not interdissolve with the oil component, and the critical micelle concentration (CMC) of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in the compound is higher than that of the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant in water;

an O/W one-phase microemulsion preparation step in which an O/W one-phase microemulsion is prepared by inverting the W/O emulsion by adding (E) water; and

an O/W ultrafine emulsion preparation step in which an O/W ultrafine emulsion is prepared by adding the O/W one-phase microemulsion to (F) an aqueous formulation.

12. (Previously Presented) The production method of the O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation according to claim 11, wherein the HLB of (A) the hydrophilic nonionic surfactant is not less than 13, and the HLB of (B) the lipophilic nonionic surfactant is not more than 6.

13. (Previously Presented) The production method of the O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation according to claim 11, wherein the blending amount of (C) the oil component is 10–40 % by mass.
14. (Previously Presented) The production method of the O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation according to claim 11, wherein (C) the oil component is silicone oil.
15. (Previously Presented) The production method of the O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation according to claim 14, wherein (C) the oil component is one or more selected from the group consisting of decamethylcyclopentasiloxane, dimethylpolysiloxane, and methylphenylpolysiloxane.
16. (Currently Amended) The production method of the O/W ultrafine emulsion external formulation according to claim 11, wherein the blending amount of (D) the dimethyl ether compound ~~water-miscible solvent~~ is more than 5 % by mass.
17. (Cancelled)
18. (Cancelled)
19. (Previously Presented) The one-phase microemulsion composition according to claim 1, wherein the composition is in a one-phase microemulsion phase at room temperature.